Ban on Gutkha and PAN Masala

530. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to impose a country-wide ban on Gutkha and Pan Masala in the light of serious health hazards posed by its consumption;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (c) The Government introduced a draft legislation namely, "The Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Bill, 2001" for discouraging the consumption of tobacco and tobacco prc ducts including Gutkha.

The above mentioned Bill was subsequently referred to the Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development in March, 2001. The Committee presented its report to Rajya Sabha in December, 2001 recommending a number of changes. These have been examined in consultation with other Departments. The amendments are in the process of being introduced in the Rajya Sabha.

Under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954, the State Food [Health] Authorities have the independent power to prohibit the same of any article of food in the interest of public health. The States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have prohibited the sale of Gutkha/Pan Masala (containing tobacco) etc. under the said provisions.

Irregularities in the purchase of medicines by DG

531. SHRI MUNAVVAR HASAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any investigation is being conducted against the DG for the irregularities in the purchase of medicines; and

(b) in so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Increase in diabetic patients

532. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the number of diabetic patients in the country is increasing rapidly;

(b) if so, their number in the year 1995 and their number at present;

(c) whether Government have ascertained the reasons for this increase;

(d) the steps taken and research conducted to control the disease; and

(e) other details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) According to ICMR, the estimated number of diabetic patients in the country in 1995 was 19 million and 25 millions in the year 2000.

(c) There is epidemiological evidence showing increase in prevalence of diabetes particularly in the urban areas of the country which is probably because of ageing, unhealthy diets, obesity, sedentary lifestyle and better detection facilities.

(d) and (e) diabetes treatment is done at all levels in the rural health care delivery system and urban health care institutions. A pilot Project on "Strengthening of Bio-chemical Laboratories and Quality Assurance", was initiated in 1999-2000 in the States of Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal & Punjab. The National diabetes Control Programme has now been merged with the Indian Council of Medical Research which has constituted as Expert Group to formulate a revised comprehensive plan of action to control diabetes. Central Health Education Bureau (CHEB) has also strategies/programme including use of powerful electronic media to spread health messages to increase Public Health awareness about diabetes.